

moved to Business Manager in 1966—a position he held for nearly twenty years. Under Mr. Mocer's leadership, an apprenticeship program was developed. This program, initiated by Mr. Mocer in 1974, has proven extremely successful.

Mr. Mocer was on the State Boiler Board and the Building Trades Committee. He also had the honor and distinction of serving on Senator Percy's Labor Task Force Committee.

Tony Mocer has been married to his wife, Vera, for 44 years.

I would like for my colleagues to give special recognition in honor of Local 363 naming their new facility for Tony Mocer.

STATEMENT OF KATHIE LEE GIFFORD CONCERNING CHILD LABOR TO THE CONGRESSIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CAUCUS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 1998

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week on Monday September 28, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus held a briefing for members of this body on international child labor issues. Child labor has traditionally been among the most difficult and troubling of the human rights issues that we deal with. The problem is the greatest in those countries where poverty and lack of economic opportunity are the greatest. Furthermore, the extensive use of child labor only perpetuates that cycle of poverty by limiting the opportunity for these working children to attend school and gain the education they need to improve their situation.

Developing countries, in their struggle to improve their national economic and social conditions, often have failed to deal with the tragedy of child laborers. The International Labor Organizations (ILO) has estimated that some 250 million children between the ages of five and fourteen are working in developing countries around the world. Some 61 percent of this total, nearly 153 million children, are found in Asia alone.

To alleviate the grinding poverty and economic hardships that they face, many families in developing countries submit children to some of the worst forms of child labor such as exposure to extremely hazardous work, slave-like conditions, prostitution, pornography, and other intolerable situation. Often child victims of this practice never learn to read or write at all, and upon reaching adulthood these children can only pass the legacy of poverty, illiteracy, and hardship to their own children.

Mr. Speaker, in recent years, with the strong support of our Department of State and our Department of Labor, efforts have been made to raise awareness of this serious problem. In 1992 the ILO initiated the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor to work toward the progressive elimination of child labor. These efforts must be encouraged.

Mr. Speaker, at the briefing of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, Kathie Lee Clifford, who was accompanied by her husband, Frank Gillord, made an excellent statement on this issue of child labor. I ask that her statement be placed in the RECORD, and I urge my colleagues to give thoughtful attention to her views.

STATEMENT OF KATHIE LEE GIFFORD

In the past two and half years I have learned a great deal about sweatshops and child labor—enough to make me physically ill and at many times brokenhearted. I have learned that all it takes to create a sweatshop environment is one greedy, unethical person and one desperate one. While it seems that solutions of the past have done little to combat labor abuses, I've also learned that if the various groups represented here work together, unified by the mandate that we must end these horrible conditions, we could accomplish a great deal.

When I was accused personally of being involved in labor abuses I was stunned. How could anyone possibly believe I could run a sweatshop? (1) I don't manufacture anything; (2) I don't own a factory; (3) I don't pay anyone to manufacture anything; and (4) I have an iron-clad contract that specifically states nothing can be manufactured with my name on it in an abusive manner. But, then I learned how easy it is for someone to exploit the system, ignore the compliance agreement, and profit from the misery of hard-working, vulnerable people—even children. I was angry and resolved it do whatever I could to do something about it.

Although I'm an endorser, a licenser of my trademark—and not the manufacture of goods—I promised that if, and whenever I discovered that any goods bearing my name were made in a factory with abusive conditions, either these conditions would be corrected or nothing with my name would continue to be made in that factory. I hired a reputable worldwide firm of independent monitors to inspect the factories so that I would learn their working conditions. When unfair working conditions are discovered we give the factory one chance to rectify the problem. If the conditions are not corrected, we take away our business. In the case of child labor abuses we do not allow a second chance—one time and the factory's out. This monitoring program will continue so long as I lend my name to any goods or products.

I learned about and campaigned for legislation on the Federal, State and local levels to address working conditions. I'm here to support legislation such as the "Young American Workers Bill of Rights Act" and the "Children's Act for Responsible Employment." These acts must promptly be passed by Congress. In Congressman LANTOS' words, "We have neither the time nor the luxury to debate whether this is a child labor problem." But I've also learned that legislation alone will not solve the problem: We need the concerted effort of Government, manufacturers, unions and human interest organizations. I know that these groups, while supporting many of the same ideas, sometimes disagree on means and methods of accomplish their goals. We must continue to work together, to enact and enforce laws; but also to educate consumers—these are the "new solutions for child labor abuses."

I truly appreciate being asked to appear before you today. I am here as the mother of two small children from whom I hope to leave a legacy of hard work, sacrifice, fairness and a determined commitment to make this world a better place for all children, especially children less blessed than my own. I realize that in certain ways my name has become synonymous with the term "sweatshop." That as been painful to me both personally and professionally, and yet I have always felt that all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose. I find comfort and hope in this promise from the Scriptures—that indeed my struggle will result in aiding all of your efforts to end the very real and heartbreaking struggle of millions of vulnerable children around the world.

There are many other celebrity endorsers lending their good names of products manufactured throughout the world. I believe each of them has a moral responsibility to take whatever steps possible to ensure the integrity of their products. A contract with strong language is simply not enough. I encourage them to hire, at their own expense a reputable independent monitoring service and use their public platform to educate consumers and pressure their manufacturers to comply with all ethical and legal standards.

None of us can ignore the use of child labor. Today, in this room, there are Members of Congress and representatives of human rights organizations, unions and government and private citizens like myself. Let us together be a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves. Comfortable in our privileged world, we cannot hear the cries of the children chained to a life of abuse, but our silence at the injustices they suffer is deafening to the ears of God.

Perhaps we can put a face on child labor by substituting our own children with the faceless children we only know as statistics. Today when you go to dress your six-year-old, stop to think of that six-year old being snuck into the back of a sweatshop to work long hours, cutting and sewing clothes they could never afford. Today when you watch your seven-year-old run back and forth on a soccer field, think of that seven-year-old sitting in a sweltering factory making that soccer ball he will never have a chance to play with. And today when you shoot baskets with your eight-year-old, think of the eight-year-old who sewed those sneakers and who will never, every jump for joy. Think of your own children and think of all the children all over the world who are being denied a childhood because of others' greed and our own indifference.

Each of us has a responsibility and an opportunity. Our responsibility is to make the world a better place for these children to live and work in. Our opportunity is now for new solutions for child labor abuses; to enact laws like the "Young American Workers Bill of Rights Act" and the "Children's Act for Responsible Employment" to join together to form a powerful alliance of caring individuals who refuse to support companies that utilize child labor; and finally, to pray for all the children of the world that someday they may enjoy a life in the sunshine, breathing fresh air and laughing with a joy that can only come from knowing that they are loved and that they are precious just like our own children.

Perhaps the most important thing I have learned about this issue is that sweatshops operators are counting on one thing—that you don't care how your products are made. These children are counting on something very different—that you do care, especially when they're made by children. Together through our efforts and the work of this Congressional Human Rights Caucus, let's prove the children are right and let's make the unspeakable shame of abusive child labor a thing of the past.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 4646, THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG FAIRNESS ACT

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 1998

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4646, a bill allowing pharmacies to purchase drugs for

Medicare beneficiaries at the substantially reduced prices already available under the Federal supply schedule. This important piece of legislation would dramatically lower prescription drug costs for senior citizens.

Most Americans are aware of the ever increasing costs of health care and prescription medication. But no segment of the American population is impacted more than our senior citizens. Senior citizens are having an increasingly difficult time affording prescription drugs. For senior citizens on fixed incomes, the cost of prescription drugs is one of their highest monthly bills and can mean the difference between buying basic necessities or medicine. No senior should ever be forced to choose between buying food or medicine, especially those with disabling ailments who often depend on their medication just to make it through the day.

Seniors are being forced to pay much steeper prices than the "most favored customers" of drug companies such as HMO's. It's just plain wrong for large pharmaceutical companies to be charging the highest prices to those who can least afford to pay them. Large corporations should not be making a profit at the expense of our senior's health.

H.R. 4646 would fix this problem by leveling the playing field for retail pharmacies who sell drugs to senior citizens. This legislation would allow retail pharmacies to buy medications used by senior citizens directly from the General Services Administration (GSA) of the Federal Government. Because the GSA is one of the entities able to purchase prescription medication at much lower prices, this procedure will allow pharmacists to pass on significant savings to senior citizens.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation that protects the health of our Nation's senior citizens. I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

MEDICARE+CHOICE MEDICAL NECESSITY PROTECTION ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 1998

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Medicare+Choice Medical Necessity Protection Act. With passage of the Balanced Budget Act, Congress has opened the Medicare program to a host of private insurance companies that will be competing with each other to get the most Medicare patients while spending the least amount of money. One of the cost-saving mechanisms commonly used to managed care plans today is to interpret "medical necessity" on their own terms. In this manner, health plans can avoid paying for services that would be considered normal and appropriate based on the standard medical practice of the day. Using such means, health plans can and do override the medical decisions of treating physicians.

The clearest examples of this type of health plan behavior have also been areas where Congress has recently considered specific legislation. In the last Congress, we passed a law to prohibit health plans from requiring a mother who had just given birth to leave the hospital in less than 48 hours after birth. This

year, Congress has been considering similar legislation with respect to a two-day stay for women who have undergone mastectomies.

It is not good legislative policy to pass such case-by-case fixes to health plan behavior that we find abhorrent. Standard medical practices change on a continual basis. Having requirements for length-of-stay in federal law could become problematic if that medical standard changes. These decisions are best left in the hands of medical professionals. Unfortunately, with the growth of managed care in our country, it is often not medical professionals who are making such treatment decisions. These cases are becoming so blatantly arbitrary and without medical merit that Congress has been forced into action by public outcries. Rather than continue such case-by-case legislating, I support the creation of a medical necessity standard that would eliminate health plans' abilities to manipulate the standard.

Under this proposal, medical necessity would be defined as "a service or a benefit which is consistent with generally accepted principles of professional medical practice." This definition was part of the Democratic Patients' Bill of Rights (HR 3605), which created federal consumer protection standards for managed care plans in the private sector. It is also the common definition of medical necessity which has been established in case law over the past century.

The Medicare+Choice Medical Necessity Protection Act would add that same definition of medical necessity to the Medicare+Choice program. This change would help ensure that seniors' who join any of the new Medicare+Choice health plan options in Medicare would have the protection of knowing that their private health plan could not manipulate the rules in order to avoid coverage and payment for appropriate medical services. It would put medical decision-making back in the hands of doctors where it belongs—not under the control health plan bureaucrats.

Let me emphasize that this amendment would not mean that a health plan would ever be required to cover a service that is clearly not covered by the plan's contract. It only applies to covered services. So, if a health plan does not provide coverage for hearing aids, inclusion of this definition would never require the health plan to make an exception and cover a hearing aid for a particular person.

The Medicare+Choice Medical Necessity Protection Act is a simple, sensible bill. It would ensure that all Medicare+Choice plans are playing under a uniform set of rules for coverage determinations and would end the practice of health plans arbitrarily overriding doctors' judgments. Our Medicare beneficiaries deserve no less. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 6, HIGHER EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. CHAKA FATTAH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 28, 1998

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I cannot over-emphasize the importance of the passage of

the High Hopes/GEAR UP program as a part of the Higher Education Reauthorization legislation adopted by the House today. This program is the embodiment of all that is right about our legislative process and about the fundamental American creed which unites us as a people. I want to take the time to recount the history of this idea so that the record will show the difference that can be made when we are true to the process and to that creed.

The challenge which the High Hopes/GEAR UP program addresses is insuring that all American children have the opportunity to go to college. For the children of most middle class families, that college is an option after high school graduation is taken for granted. For most poor children, college is not even in the picture. No one they know has gone to college. If the thought ever occurs to them, it is dismissed as an unattainable fantasy. Often these attitudes and conclusions are based on misinformation about the cost of college, or about the availability of financial aid and other sources of support, or perhaps it's just that the notion of college is so remote from their experience that nothing in their lives has prepared them to take advantage of opportunities that might be right before their eyes.

Whatever the underlying dynamic, the end result is that children in poor neighborhoods often make life-changing decisions that deal them out of the mainstream game before they get their first chance at bat. Because the vision of their future is inevitably defined solely by what they see and what they know, they are too often drawn off onto the various side roads of life—high school dropout, teenage pregnancy, truancy, delinquency, and other anti-social activities. These outcomes serve no one. They destroy the young people's potential, they tax our society, and they waste our precious human capital.

The High Hopes/GEAR UP Program will elevate the vision of millions of young people to let them see that college is possible for them. It will give them a future to focus on that will help pull them successfully through their high school years in a way that prepares and positions them to go on to college. As is done for children of middle class families, the program is designed to surround them with the expectation that they will pursue this goal, give them the complete spectrum of information that they need to conclude that this goal is achievable, and strengthen the support systems needed to get them from here to there.

The High Hopes/GEAR UP Program will provide certainty to students and their families that they will be able to afford college. Beginning in middle school, the Secretary of Education will send children in high poverty neighborhoods, 21st Century Scholar Certificates that notify them annually of the financial aid that will be available to them for college when they graduate from high school. It will support partnerships between universities, businesses, and community-based organizations that will insure that these "21st Century Scholars" will have the mentoring, educational enrichment, social services and academic supports they need to stay in school, work hard, and graduate prepared for college. The unprecedented success of private programs such as Eugene Lang's "I Have a Dream" in New York, and Ruth Hayre's "Tell Them We Are Rising" in Philadelphia, gives us every reason to believe that these approaches will have a huge impact on high school graduation, college attendance, and college completion rates.